

### **ABSTRACT**

A method of forming a dual damascene opening comprising the following steps. A structure having an overlying exposed conductive layer formed thereover is provided. A dielectric layer is formed over the exposed conductive layer. An anti-reflective coating layer is formed over the dielectric layer. The anti-reflective layer and the dielectric layer are etched using a via opening process to form an initial via exposing a portion of the conductive layer. A protective film portion is formed over at least the exposed portion of the conductive layer. The anti-reflective coating layer and the dielectric layer are patterned to reduce the initial via to a reduced via and to form a trench opening substantially centered over the reduced via. The trench opening and the reduced via comprising the dual damascene opening.